GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2287
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2016
Status of Coral Reefs
Kher Smt. Kirron

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been conducted or reports published on the status of coral reefs in India and the damage caused due to climate change;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) wheher initiatives have been taken to protect coral reefs in the country and if so, the details thereof; and
(d) the existing legal provisions for coral reef protection in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) and (b) As per information supplied by the Indian Space Research Organisation, a spatial inventory of Indian Coral Reefs using satellite data pertaining to 2004-07 timeframe has been published as an Atlas entitled "Coral Reef Atlas of the World" (Vol.1), 2010. Studies on coral reef coral bleaching due to rise in sea surface temperature (SST) revealed that Indian Coral reef regions experience mass bleaching when regional summer thermal thresholds are crossed and the SST anomalies persists for more than a week time continuously. It was observed that coral reefs of Lakshadweep were found in pristine condition, while Andaman and Nicobar reefs were found in vulnerable condition. Coral reefs of Gulf of Kachchh and Gulf of Mannar were found in degrading condition. A Coral Bleaching Alert System (CBAS) has been developed by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, which is operational since 2010. The objective of developing the CBAS is to help in identification of thermal stress on coral systems for protection, preservation and the health of coral reefs in the country.

(c) and (d) The Government seeks to protect and sustain coral reefs in the country through both promotional and regulatory measures. The Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme entitled "Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs" at four sites namely Lakshadweep, Gulf of Kachchh, Gulf of Mannar and Andaman & Nicobar islands for restoration, monitoring, conservation and management of coral reefs. The Ministry provides 60% central assistance to the four coastal States/Union Territories, for implementation of their approved Management Action Plans for coral reefs. The Government has enacted the following Acts, and framed rules thereunder for protection of coral reefs in the country:

(i) The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been enacted to provide legal protection against hunting of wildlife in the country. Some species of Corals have been provided legal protection by including them in Schedule I of the Act. A Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has also been constituted under the Act to combat wildlife crime in the country. Further, the government has also established both terrestrial and marine protected areas viz. National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife including coral habitats under the provisions of the Act.
(ii) The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification (2011) has been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. CRZ 2011 notification recognizes the coral reef areas as ecologically sensitive and categorizes them as CRZ-I which implies that these areas are afforded protection of the highest order.

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